

Dear Teacher or Principal,

Your state representative has arranged to visit your classroom or school during America's Legislators Back to School Week, September 15-19, 2003. Enclosed is a brief description of the program, as well as a briefing paper, StateStats, from the sponsoring organization, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), about this program's impact on civic participation by American youth.

GUIDES AND LESSON PLANS

A Teacher's Guide developed by NCSL is enclosed. Detailed Lesson Plans are also available on NCSL's web site. You may want to use these materials for followup discussions and projects related to representative democracy.

WEB SITE

NCSL's web site contains a wealth of information about the Back to School program, including detailed lesson plans, background information, promotion strategies, partnering organizations, and the like. Go to: <http://www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm>

To see images from last year's Back to School Week in Louisiana, visit the House of Representatives Back to School home page on the Web at:

<http://house.louisiana.gov/b2s03/backtoschool.htm>

We enclose a brief bio page of your visiting representative. This information -- and much more about the House of Representatives and its members -- can be found on our web site at:

<http://house.louisiana.gov>

RESOURCES

Your representative has been provided with age-appropriate resource materials to bring to the classroom. Some legislators may bring a 16-minute video developed for the Back to School event and will need a TV and VCR.

PLEASE COORDINATE WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE TO DISCUSS HIS OR HER IDEAS FOR THE VISIT TO YOUR SCHOOL.

PROMOTION

Our office is coordinating with local media to cover many legislators' visits. We have advised the media to contact the school in advance for permission to cover a legislator's visit. You may wish to promote the event in your school bulletin or newsletter or web site, or you may wish to promote it on your campus with banners, posters, school marquees, or classroom decor. If you have a school newspaper, coverage of the event might make a good article. If one is written, we'd appreciate your forwarding us a copy. Don't forget to coordinate with your legislator about having a camera available to photograph the event. (We'll post memorable photos on our web site.)

EVALUATION

After the visit, please fill out the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Form that the representative will leave for you (sample copy enclosed). We encourage you to use the Student Evaluation Form as well, as a class exercise, and send us the result (sample copy enclosed).

CONTACT US

For further information, please contact us:

Sheila McCant
Public Information Officer
Louisiana House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Public Information Office, Room B-183
900 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Phone (225) 342-9795
Fax (225) 219-4380
mccants@legis.state.la.us

Kathleen Randall
Assistant Clerk
House of Representatives
PO Box 44281
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4281
(225) 342-7259
fax (225) 342-5045
randallk@legis.state.la.us

AMERICA'S LEGISLATORS BACK TO SCHOOL WEEK

Sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures, America's Legislators Back to School Week is designed to teach young people--the nation's future voters and leaders--what it's like to be a state legislator: the processes, the pressures, and the debate, negotiation and compromise that are the very fabric of representative democracy. NCSL emphasizes that America's Legislators Back to School Week is a bipartisan event. Legislators of both political parties are urged to participate in this national day and to tell the story of representative democracy in America.

NCSL initially introduced the America's Legislators Back to School program in 1999 as a one-day event, to provide a contemporary approach for engaging the American student population in understanding the value of democracy. It was a great success and was enthusiastically received by both legislators and schools. The program was so productive and compelling that it was expanded into a one-week event in 2001. This year it is scheduled for the week of September 15-19.

America's Legislators Back to School Week is a valuable opportunity for state legislatures to answer NCSL's call to promote civic education on representative democracy. Last year, 126 Louisiana legislators visited over 200 schools and spoke to over 30,000 students, the second-highest participation in the country.

The Louisiana House and Senate Public Information offices received the Margaret McDonald Journalism Award, first place for community or institutional relations, presented by the Louisiana Press Women for the 2002 Back to School Program. And the 2001 program received a Lantern Award of Excellence from the Southern Public Relations Federation.

The goal of America's Legislators Back to School Week is to educate future citizens about what it is like to be a state legislator and what the legislature does. It will also result in focusing state legislators on civic education during the same week all across the country, building personal links between schools and legislators and providing legislators an opportunity to observe the schools in their districts.

More information on the Legislators Back to School program may be obtained online through NCSL at www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm or at the state legislative web site, www.legis.state.la.us

For more information on the Louisiana program, contact:

Louisiana Senate:

Sherri Breaux
225-342-6145

Brenda Hodge
225-342-9737

Louisiana House of Representatives:

Sheila McCant
225-342-9795

Kathleen Randall
225-342-7259

Please visit the Teacher's Guide : <http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/teacherguide.htm>

America's Legislators Back to School Week--September 15-19, 2003

A Program of the Trust for Representative Democracy

Evaluation—Fourth – Sixth Grade Students

Please answer these questions and return this to your teacher
or complete the form online by going to <http://www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm>
and clicking on the evaluation forms link.

*Your answers will be used to evaluate the America's Legislators Back to School Week event
and the materials provided by NCSL. Your words may be used in future promotional pieces.*

School: _____ State: _____

Grade Level: _____ Subject: _____

Name of legislator visiting your classroom: _____

1. Did you enjoy meeting a state legislator? (check one) Yes _____ No _____

2. Tell us one thing you learned from the legislator. _____

3. Did your class receive the "Your Ideas Count!" TFK Extra? Yes _____ No _____

4. If yes, how did you like the booklet overall? (circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

5. Was the booklet appropriate for your grade level? Yes _____ No _____

6. Do you think America's Legislators Back to School Week is a good program?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Do you have any suggestions or ideas to make the event better next year? _____

Questions? Contact Jan Goehring, Project Coordinator, jan.goehring@ncsl.org

America's Legislators Back to School Week--September 15-19, 2003

A Program of the Trust for Representative Democracy

Evaluation—Middle School/High School Students

Please answer these questions and return this form to your teacher or complete the form online by going to <http://www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm> and clicking on the evaluation forms link.

Your responses will be used to evaluate the America's Legislators Back to School Week event and the materials provided by NCSL. Your quotes may be used in future promotional pieces.

School: _____ State: _____

Grade Level: _____ Subject: _____

Name of legislator visiting your classroom: _____

1. Did the legislator show the "Your Ideas Count!" video? Yes ____ No ____

2. If yes, how would you rate the video overall? (circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. Was the video appropriate for your grade level? Yes ____ No ____

4. Did it help you understand concepts of representative democracy? (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Did your class receive a "Your Ideas Count!" booklet? Yes ____ No ____

Which booklet did your class receive?

____ "Your Ideas Count!" Representative Democracy and You (adult booklet)

____ "Your Ideas Count!" Questions & Answers about Representative Democracy (student booklet)

6. If yes, how would you rate the booklet overall? (circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

7. Was the booklet appropriate for your grade level? Yes ____ No ____

Tell us one thing you learned from the legislator? _____

Tell us about what you learned from the "Your Ideas Count!" video or booklet? _____

8. Do you think America's Legislators Back to School Week is a good program? Yes ____ No ____

Do you have any suggestions or ideas to make the event better next year? _____

Questions? Contact Jan Goehring, Project Coordinator, jan.goehring@ncsl.org

America's Legislators Back to School Week--September 15-19, 2003

A Program of the Trust for Representative Democracy

Evaluation—Teacher/Principal

Please complete and return to the state coordinators:

Sheila McCant (fax 225/219-4380) or Kathleen Randall (fax 225/342-5045)
or fax to NCSL, attn: Jan Goehring at (303) 364-7800 or complete the form online by going to
<http://www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm> and clicking on the evaluation forms link.

Your responses will be used to evaluate the America's Legislators Back to School Week event and
the materials provided by NCSL. Selected quotes may be used in future promotional pieces.

Your Name: _____ School: _____

Grade Level: _____ Subject: _____ State: _____

Name of legislator visiting your classroom: _____

1. Did your class watch the "Your Ideas Count!" video? Yes ____ No ____

1a) If yes, how would you rate the video overall?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

1b) Was the video appropriate for this grade level? Yes ____ No ____

1c) Did it help students understand concepts of representative democracy?

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Please check and rate the following publication(s) provided by NCSL:

Publication	Excellent		Fair		Poor
____ "Your Ideas Count!" Representative Democracy and You (adult booklet)	5	4	3	2	1
____ "Your Ideas Count!" Questions & Answers about Representative Democracy (student booklet)	5	4	3	2	1
____ "TFK Extra" magazine (grades 4-6)	5	4	3	2	1
____ "TFK Extra" magazine (grades 2-3)	5	4	3	2	1
____ Did not receive any NCSL publications					

3. Did you use the online lesson plans provided by NCSL? Yes ____ No ____

3a) If yes, how would you rate the lesson plans overall?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

3b) Were the plans appropriate for this grade level? Yes ___ No ___

3c) Did the plans complement the legislators visit? Yes ___ No ___

3d) Did the plans help you prepare for or follow up on the visit? Yes ___ No ___

4. Did you consult with the legislator prior to his or her visit to the classroom? Yes ___ No ___

5. How did you learn about Back to School Week? _____

6. Did this program meet your expectations? Yes ___ No ___

7. Comments and Suggestions: (attach separate sheet)

Questions? Contact Jan Goehring, Program Director, jan.goehring@ncsl.org